

population of this group resides in my home State of Hawaii. Filipino Americans have been in the United States since the 18th century and have been in Hawaii since 1906, when the first Filipino migrant laborers came to Hawaii to work on the sugar and pineapple plantations. Those Filipinos, their descendants, and the recent immigrants to Hawaii and America have made an indelible impact on our culture, and we should be sure to take this month to recognize the contributions of Filipino Americans.

While Filipinos have made great contributions to America, it is important that we not overlook the needs of the community, including a fair and sensible immigration policy. I chair the Immigration Task Force of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, CAPAC, and I will continue to fight for the needs of families within the immigration debate.

One of the major issues for the Filipino Americans and other Asian Pacific American communities is family reunification: allowing relatives of legal permanent residents, other than spouses and minor children, to immigrate legally and join their families. It can take the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as long as 23 years to even consider an application for a family member from the Philippines.

The extended family is a foundation in many of our cultures, and it provides real benefits to the greater society as well. Families often pool resources to educate children or purchase homes and establish roots in their communities. We often see extended family networks starting businesses, providing economic development and jobs. Congress must act to ensure that families who will contribute to American society are not punished by our immigration system.

The treatment of Filipinos who fought with the United States Armed Forces in World War II is also an issue of great concern for Filipino Americans and a dark spot in American History. The Philippines became a United States possession after Spain ceded it as part of the treaty ending the Spanish-American War in 1898. In 1934, Congress created a 10-year time frame for independence through the "Philippine Independence Act." However, since the Philippines remained a colonial possession until 1946 the United States retained the right to call upon military forces organized by the Philippine government into the United States Armed Forces.

On July 26, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a military order that brought the Philippine Commonwealth Forces under the control of the United States Armed Forces during World War II. These men bravely fought with our own troops during the war, and many perished or suffered severe wounds from the battles in the western Pacific Theater. After the surrender of Japan, Congress required the Philippine Forces to continue service their service. Many helped occupy lands, many oversaw military operations, and many made the ultimate sacrifice to secure our victory in World War II. Yet, when wartime service ended formally in 1946 they did not receive the same benefits and the same treatment as other American soldiers.

Yet, for all their heroic and courageous actions, Congress passed the "Recession Act" in February 1946. This essentially denied Filipino veterans any of the benefits that their

American comrades in arms received, including full access to veterans' health care; service-connected disability compensation, non-service connected disability compensation, dependent indemnity compensation, death pension, and full burial benefits. No other group of veterans has been systematically denied these benefits. While we are nearly out of time to right this wrong this Congress, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the 111th Congress on ensuring Filipino veterans the benefits they deserve.

Filipino Americans have enriched the fabric of America, and I am proud to celebrate Filipino American Heritage Month. I look forward to continuing to work with the Filipino American community to address the needs and concerns of Filipino Americans throughout the United States.

#### RECOGNIZING FAMILIA UNIDA LIVING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**HON. HILDA L. SOLIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2008*

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the work and service that Familia Unida Living with Multiple Sclerosis, Familia Unida, contributes throughout California's 32nd Congressional District.

Familia Unida's mission is to enlighten, educate, and unite families that are affected by Multiple Sclerosis, MS, as well as other debilitating diseases. Though originally founded to provide culturally and linguistically sensitive resources to the Latino community dealing with MS, Familia Unida's outreach now extends into the entire MS community, providing services to any who request assistance in coping with this disease. Through events such as the 5th Annual Wheelchair Wash, Familia Unida continues to bring awareness to the importance of the inclusion of all persons, especially those living with disabilities, in our lives.

Familia Unida has enhanced the quality of life for many through its extensive services in obtaining health care access, as well as providing educational resources. As Familia Unida continues to honor its founding principles of providing culturally sensitive programs and support for those living with MS, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing its valued service and commitment to the MS community.

#### RECOGNIZING BOB SIKES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UPON ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2008*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize Bob Sikes Elementary School on its fiftieth anniversary.

Named after Robert L. F. Sikes, the beloved former U.S. Representative of Crestview, Florida, Bob Sikes Elementary School upholds the same values and standards as its namesake.

Serving from 1941 until 1962, Congressman Sikes is still remembered for his hard work and dedication to the area. His image continues to live on in the exemplary institutions that adopt both his name and his commitment to excellence.

For 5 decades, Bob Sikes Elementary School has influenced the academic success of its students. The school houses an exceptional faculty whose outstanding teaching capabilities have enhanced the learning opportunities for those enrolled. The school's administration is equally impressive as it expertly balances the rigorous demands of running the school. It is the countless hours of service and dedication employed by the faculty and administration that have enabled the students at Bob Sikes Elementary to attain academic excellence.

In addition to the active academic environment, Bob Sikes Elementary maintains a strong sense of community and enables each of its students to feel special. Teachers take the time to recognize and reward students' individual talents and help foster a familial feel in the classrooms. After 50 years, multiple generations of Crestview families who have attended Bob Sikes Elementary look back fondly on the school that taught them to read, to be kind to others, to count, and so many other important lessons. It is a testament to the school's academic and administrative strengths that 5 decades of families have continued to send their children to this exemplary school. It is these same strengths that ensure its continued success and the enrollment of children for decades to come.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize Bob Sikes Elementary School on this outstanding achievement and for its exemplary service in the Okaloosa County School District.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2008*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I wish to recognize The Heritage Foundation on the 35th anniversary of their founding. Since 1973, Heritage has been a stalwart in promoting and educating the American people on the merits of conservative, free market principles. Their belief in the power of individual liberty, American values, and limited government is matched by their dedication to a strong national defense.

The Heritage Foundation has been intricately involved in the rise of modern conservatism. It has benefited from the strong leadership of individuals like Executive Vice President and CEO Phillip Truluck. Phil is a native of South Carolina and graduate of the University of South Carolina. Additionally, the late Tom Roe of Greenville, South Carolina, was a longtime trustee and endowed the Thomas A. Roe Institute of Economic Policy at The Heritage Foundation.

From its influence in the days of the Reagan Revolution to the Contract with America and in promoting a strong national defense and sound economic growth in the aftermath of